

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6639

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As of January 30, 2008

**Title:** An act relating to bereavement leave at institutions of higher education.

**Brief Description:** Requiring bereavement leave for employees of four-year institutions of higher education.

**Sponsors:** Senators Kauffman, Prentice, Shin, Marr, Kilmer, Schoesler and Roach.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Higher Education: 1/30/08

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

**Staff:** Aldo Melchiori (786-7439)

**Background:** Bereavement leave is paid leave that an employee is entitled to because of the death of a family or household member. At Washington community and technical colleges, the boards of trustees of each college district must grant bereavement leave, with full compensation, in addition to other illness or injury leave. An employee may transfer accumulated bereavement leave between institutions of higher education, state agencies, or educational service districts.

**Summary of Bill:** Bereavement leave, for each death in the immediate family, must be allowed to all academic, administrative, classified, and exempt employees at the University of Washington, Washington State University, each of the regional universities, and The Evergreen State College. Up to five days with pay may be allowed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: All employees at institutions of higher education should have an equal opportunity to recognize the loss of a loved one. Bereavement leave should not be part of the collective bargaining process.

OTHER: These are collectively bargained for items and they should remain so. This language would limit collective bargaining flexibility. The bill's definition of "immediate family" would exclude domestic partnerships. Current leave policies adequately provide this

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benefit. If an employee needs more time for bereavement, they can currently use sick leave or vacation time.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Senator Kauffman, prime sponsor; Tom Lopp, Public School Employees; Enren Flygare, Public School Employees.

OTHER: Wendy Rader-Konofalski, WEA; Sherry Burkey, WWU; Randy Hodgins, UW.